

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02218 101800Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----102054Z 119168 /73

P R 101652Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3972
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2218

EXDIS

FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, LE, US, EAID
SUBJECT: VIEWS OF PRESIDENT SARKIS

1. SUMMARY: CALLED ON PRESIDENT SARKIS MORNING MAY 10 FOR LAST-MINUTE TOUR D'HORIZON BEFORE CONSULTATION. DISCUSSION CENTERED AROUND SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CAIRO ACCORD. PRESIDENT INDICATED THAT THEY WERE MAKING SLOW PROGRESS TOWARD POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION OF LATTER QUESTION. WE ALSO DISCUSSED AMERICAN AID TO LEBANON AND PRESIDENT SAID IN EFFECT WE SHOULD PICK OUR OWN PROJECTS AND TELL LEBANESE WHAT WE WANTED TO DO. (AM REPORTING DISCUSSION ON CAIRO ACCORD IN SEPTTEL.) END SUMMARY.

2. CALLED ON PRESIDENT SARKIS MORNING MAY 10. TOLD HIM I WAS RETURNING TO WASHINGTON AT END OF WEEK FOR CONSULTATION AND WISHED TO HAVE LAST TOUR D'HORIZON BEFORE DEPARTURE IN ORDER TO GET BENEFIT HIS VIEWS ON SITUATION IN LEBANON AND U.S. ROLE HERE. SAID I CONSIDERED MY MISSION TO BE ONE OF HELPING HIM. AS MEANS TO THAT END I HAD BEEN (A) MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH ALL PARTIES, (B) RECOMMENDING TO MY GOVERNMENT DEMARCHES IN OTHER CAPITALS WHEN THAT SEEMED APPROPRIATE, AND (C) ATTEMPTING TO DEFINE FUTURE AID PROGRAMS HERE.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 02218 101800Z

I THOUGHT WE HAD HAD SOME SUCCESS IN ALL THESE RESPECTS AND HOPED WE WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO.

3. PRESIDENT SAID HE APPRECIATED EVERYTHING WE HAVE DONE AND THOUGHT THERE HAD INDEED BEEN RESULTS WHICH HAD BEEN OBSERVABLE IN THE FACTS WHICH HE ENCOUNTERED EVERY DAY. IN THIS REGARD, HE WOULD LIKE OUR VIEW ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE SOUTH. DID WE

THINK ISRAELIS WERE LIKELY TO MAKE TROUBLE THERE IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR ELECTIONS? I SAID SITUATION SEEMS QUIET WITH EXCEPTION CHRISTIAN SHELLING OF NABATIYAH. HE ASKED "CHRISTIAN OR ISRAELI?" I SAID ACCORDING OUR INFORMATION IT WAS CHRISTIAN. WE HAD IMPRESSION OTHER PRINCIPAL PARTIES SYRIANS, PALESTINIANS (I.E. FATAH), AND ISRAELIS-- ALL WANTED QUIET IN THAT AREA. WE HAD DISCUSSED SOUTH SEVERAL TIMES WITH SENIOR ISRAELIS RECENTLY AND ALL OF THEM HAD REITERATED THEIR DESIRE FOR CONTINUED PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE AREA. PRINCIPAL SOURCES OF INSTABILITY AT THIS POINT WERE EXTREMIST CHRISTIANS AND REJECTIONIST PALESTINIANS.

4. SARKIS SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED THE SOUTH RECENTLY WITH PALESTINIANS AND HAD ASKED ARAFAT WHY THEY DID NOT IMPLEMENT THE CAIRO ACCORD IN THE SOUTH BY THEMSELVES. WHY FORCE HIM TO SEND TROOPS THERE; WHY NOT DO SOMETHING TO IMPROVE THEIR LOCAL IMAGE? ARAFAT HAD REPLIED WITH THE FAMILIAR REFRAIN THAT HE WAS READY TO DO SO BUT HE COULD NOT GET THE REFUSAL FRONT TO GO ALONG.

5. WE THEN HAD EXTENDED CONVERSATION CAIRO ACCORD WHICH IS BEING REPORTED SEPTEL.

6. WITH REGARD TO AID TO LEBANON, I EXPLAINED THAT WE HOPED TO HAVE \$20 MILLION AVAILABLE NEXT FISCAL YEAR FOR GRANT AID, PLUS WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR PL-480 AND HOUSING GUARANTEE PROGRAMS. THERE WAS ALSO A POSSIBILITY OF FMS CREDITS. I WOULD BE DISCUSSING ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS IN WASHINGTON IN AN EFFORT TO GET MORE PRECISION AS TO WHAT WE COULD DO. PRESIDENT SAID THEY WOULD APPRECIATE ANY AID WE COULD EXTEND. AS WE KNEW, LEBANON WAS IN NEED OF HELP AND ALL CONTRIBUTIONS WERE WELCOME.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 02218 101800Z

7. I SAID THAT, SPEAKING VERY FRANKLY, ONE OF PROBLEMS WAS KNOWING LEBANESE PRIORITIES, WHICH HAD YET TO BE CLEARLY DEFINED. PRESIDENT RESPONDED THAT IF THERE WAS ONE THING THERE WAS NO SHORTAGE OF IT WAS PRIORITIES. LEBANON NEEDED EVERYTHING. I COULD SEE FOR MYSELF WHAT HAD BEEN DESTROYED AND WHAT HAD TO BE REBUILT. HE THEN SENT FOR THE TEXT OF A DECISION SENT BY THE CABINET TO THE DEVELOPMENT BOARD ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES. UNFORTUNATELY, HE DID NOT GIVE ME A COPY TO TAKE WITH ME BUT READ OFF VERY RAPIDLY FIVE CATEGORIES AS FOLLOWS: AIRPORT, PORTS, WATER AND ELECTRICITY, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT. HE SAID BEST STUDY OF NEEDS AND PRIORITIES HAD BEEN THAT MADE BY AID TEAM WHICH HAD BEEN HERE IN JANUARY. THEIR REPORT WAS ONLY SOUND ONE TO DATE AND WE SHOULD USE THAT AS POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR OWN DECISIONS. WE SHOULD DECIDE WHAT WE WANTED TO DO AND THEN TELL LEBANESE RATHER THAN ASKING THEM FIRST.

8. I SAID THAT WAS GOOD TO KNOW, BUT SINCE AMERICAN TEAM HAD BEEN HERE LEBANESE HAD HAD NUMBER OF DISCUSSIONS WITH VARIOUS ARAB FUNDS, AND THERE SEEMED TO BE SOME DIFFERENCES OF VIEWS AMONG THE

LEBANESE AS TO WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE US TO DO. DIRECTOR ATALLAH OF DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL HAD SUGGESTED WE TAKE ON THE ROAD REPAIR PROJECT. PRIME MINISTER HAD SAID THAT WAS A GOOD PROJECT BUT HE THOUGHT PERHAPS HOUSING SHOULD HAVE PRIORITY. WE WANTED TO BE SURE THAT WHAT WE WERE DOING WAS SOMETHING THE LEBANESE THEMSELVES WANTED.

9. PRESIDENT SAID NOTHING HAD BEEN DECIDED BY ARAB FUNDS. THEY WERE STUDYING VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE ON CERTAIN PROJECTS. WE SHOULD NOT BE CONCERNED ABOUT THAT. WHATEVER WE DECIDED WE WERE MOST COMFORTABLE DOING WAS FINE WITH THE LEBANESE. THEY WOULD THEN HAVE SAUDIS AND THE OTHERS ADJUST THEIR OWN AID PROGRAMS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF OUR DECISIONS. THE NEEDS WERE SO UNIVERSAL THAT ANY PLACE WE WANTED TO CONCENTRATE WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO LEBANON. HIS PERSONAL PREFERENCE WAS THAT WE TAKE ON THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROJECT, WHICH WAS PERHAPS MOST VITAL SINGLE AREA IN TERMS OF STIMULATING BUSINESS ACTIVITY. I NOTED THAT THE FUNDS AVAILABLE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE FOR RECONSTRUCTION RATHER THAN CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 02218 101800Z

FOR DEVELOPMENT AND THAT THERE WAS SOME QUESTION WHETHER TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROJECT WAS DEVELOPMENT AND NOT RECONSTRUCTION. PRESIDENT REPLIED THAT OLD SYSTEM HAD BEEN DESTROYED AND MUST BE REPLACED. THEY WOULD, OF COURSE, PUT IN NEW AND NOT OLD EQUIPMENT. HE THOUGHT THAT WAS RECONSTRUCTION IN PUREST FORM.

10. COMMENT: IN TERMS DEVELOPING MARKET POTENTIAL FOR U.S. MANUFACTURERS, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ROAD PROJECT ARE THE MOST PROMISING.

WILL DISCUSS THIS POINT IN WASHINGTON.

11. PRESIDENT ALSO ASKED WHAT I COULD TELL HIM ABOUT MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER AND ASAD AND WHAT WERE PROSPECTS FOR GENEVA. I SAID WE HAD ONLY PRESS REPORTS SO FAR, BUT GATHERED CARTER-ASAD MEETING HAD GONE OFF WELL. PRESIDENT NOTED THAT BRZEZINSKI HAD SAID QUESTION OF BORDERS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AND HE THOUGHT THIS SIGNIFICANT. I PROMISED TO LET HIM KNOW AS SOON AS WE HAD REPORT ON MEETING.

12. RE GENEVA, I TOLD PRESIDENT PROBLEM VERY DIFFICULT, AS HE KNEW, BUT WE WERE MAKING SERIOUS EFFORT. NEXT STEP WOULD PRESUMABLY BE VISIT TO AREA BY SECRETARY, AND FIRST MAJOR ISSUE TO RESOLVE SEEMED TO BE PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION. PRESIDENT SAID HE HOPED SECRETARY WOULD INCLUDE LEBANON ON ITINERARY. LAST VISIT HAD VERY POSITIVE EFFECT AND HE FELT IT IMPORTANT HE COME TO LEBANON AGAIN. I AGREED.
PARKER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, MEETINGS, CIVIL DISORDERS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BEIRUT02218
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770164-1112
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770576/aaaacnnb.tel
Line Count: 166
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7d5dc397-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2589214
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VIEWS OF PRESIDENT SARKIS
TAGS: PFOR, EAID, LE, US, (SARKIS, ELIAS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7d5dc397-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009